

SOCIOLOGY 352A- THE ORGANIZATION OF WORK
Term 1, 2015
Tuesday & Thursday, 9:30-11am

PRELIMINARY SYLLABUS – SUBJECT TO CHANGE

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Office hours: Thursdays 11:00-12:00pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course presents a selective overview of a key topic in sociology, the organization of work. Work is central to all our lives, and the organization of paid and unpaid work shapes our experiences in fundamental ways. Complicated divisions of labour make our everyday activities possible, and our own position in this division of labour influences the relative resources and status we enjoy in society more broadly. But how is it that we come to organize human labour in particular ways? Why are some people more likely to do certain kinds of work than others? Why are some jobs more prestigious and/or highly paid than others? How and why does the organization of work change over time? These are some of the questions we will address in this class.

In investigating these issues, the overarching question of the relationship between continuities and changes in the organization of work and the social patterning of inequality will be our central focus. The ultimate goal is to situate individual experiences of work and inequality in the broader social contexts that shape them, including cultural norms, organizational structures, occupations and professions, industrial relations, and regulatory regimes. As theoretical concepts are applied to different kinds of work, students will gain a deep understanding of the ties between social context and the organization of work, and develop their research, analytical and critical thinking skills.

PRE-REQUISITES

Sociology 100, or instructor approval.

REQUIRED TEXTS

There is one required text for the course, available in the bookstore.

Sallaz, Jeffrey (2013) Labor, Economy, and Society. Wiley.

There is also a free e-book copy at the library but there are restrictions on multiple borrowers so don't assume you can read it at the last minute.

Other readings are either available full-text through the library (articles), or are on the connect site's course reserve (book chapters – marked with (C)).

COURSE FORMAT & REQUIREMENTS

The class meets twice a week (Tuesday and Thursday), for an hour and a half each meeting. Tuesday classes will be primarily devoted to interactive lectures that provide background on the week's material and readings. Thursdays will be dedicated to discussions of the week's readings and lecture material in small groups or devoted to work on a group project. We will work together to review concepts, share ideas, make new connections, follow-up on insights & arguments as well as encourage and support each other in learning sometimes difficult ideas. This interaction is one of the most important things we do.

You are expected to have completed the week's readings prior to the lecture class on Tuesdays.

Email & office hours.

If you have a question about the course logistics, schedule, or structure, please consult – in this order – (1) the syllabus; (2) a fellow student; (3) me via email or in person at office hours. I try to respond to email within 24 hours (48 hours over weekends). If you have a substantive question or would like to discuss a concept, theory, reading, or assignment with me in detail, please come see me during office hours or make an appointment.

ASSIGNMENTS, EVALUATION, AND GRADING PROCEDURES

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| • Attendance/class participation | 5% |
| • Critical commentary and discussion item | 10% |
| • Midterm | 30% |
| • Group project | 20% |
| • Final exam | 35% |

Attendance and Participation

This is an interactive class, and its success depends on your active participation. *You play a critical role in setting the tone and energy of the class.* Participation entails coming to class, paying attention to the discussion, and not only speaking up, but doing so in a way that reveals that you have thought about the readings and what other students are saying.

Although I recognize that public speaking can be uncomfortable, it is a crucial skill, and I expect you to work on it. It is our joint responsibility to ensure that discussion is respectful and considerate, and that the class is a space in which everyone feels comfortable expressing their views. To facilitate peer-to-peer learning, I will also set up a class discussion board. While posting to the discussion board is not a requirement, thoughtful participation in this forum may also positively influence your participation grade.

I will periodically take attendance, but I recognize that perfect attendance is not always possible or desirable. **If you are sick and contagious, please stay home.** I do not expect medical documentation for one to two absences – no one needs to go to the doctor to confirm a bad cold, and we all appreciate not being sneezed on. If you have a more serious issue that is affecting your attendance in an ongoing way please let me know and arrange for the appropriate documentation.

Critical commentary and discussion item

Critical commentary: To facilitate good seminar discussions, you will be writing a commentary on one week's reading. Commentaries will help me measure your comprehension of reading materials and critical skills, as well as your ability to make comparisons and connections across readings. They will also provide a starting point for class discussion, and will be read and evaluated not only by myself but also by other students.

Commentaries be approximately **one page** and should focus on one or more topics of interest from the readings. Carefully consider the author's argument, and the evidence s/he brings to bear for that argument. What is the author's main point(s)? Does it make sense? What are the implications of such an argument? Of the other authors we have discussed, who might agree or disagree and why? Could the argument help explain things we have talked about with respect to other aspects of work and/or other readings? Does the evidence support the argument? These are some of the questions you can use to provide a starting point for your commentary. **End your commentary with a question that makes clear what topic you think we should discuss.** These questions are an important part of the commentary, and of my evaluation of it. Think hard about what you want to ask. Good questions focus on core and critical issues or make connections between different readings. The best will prompt extended discussion. Don't waste your question focusing on a small detail or tangential point that can be easily answered in a sentence or two.

Your commentary will be evaluated on how well it demonstrates your comprehension of the readings, your critical analysis, and how useful your questions are for guiding discussions. It will be worth 5% of your final grade.

Commentaries are due in class Tuesday so that I will have time to read them before Thursday's class. In class on Thursdays, you will be presenting your commentary to a small discussion group, and then helping direct the subsequent discussion. **It is therefore critical that you attend class when your discussion question is due – failure to do so without an approved and documented excuse will result in failure of this component of the class.**

Discussion item: One time in the term you will also be asked to bring some "item" or "artifact" to class for discussion. You may bring whatever you like—a magazine, a photograph, a news item, a link to an online video—as long as your "item" relates to the subject matter we are covering that week. You should also be prepared to explain why

your item is relevant to our material and have a question (or several) for the class to consider related to your item. You will be expected to submit a short write-up related to your “item.” The discussion item will be worth 5% of your final grade.

You must sign up on connect (go to the groups tab) for your discussion memo and item week

Midterm and Final examination:

Both the midterm and final examination will include short answer and essay questions designed to check your comprehension of course materials. The midterm will be in-class on **Oct 22**. The final exam will cover the entire course, with an emphasis upon material covered after the midterm. The exam will be held on the date assigned by the university. **Both exams will cover both readings and lecture material.**

Group project

In this project you will work together to describe and analyze an aspect of precarious employment in a particular country. Each group will work on a different country, and will submit a poster-project that will be displayed in ANSO and present their basic findings to the class. I recognize that it can be difficult to co-ordinate group work, so we will devote in-class time to working on the project.

COURSE POLICIES, EXPECTATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Early Alert

During the term, I will do my best to reach out and offer support. If I am concerned about your academic performance or wellbeing, I also encourage you to come and speak with me if you need assistance.

In addition, I may identify my concerns using Early Alert. The program allows academic, financial, or mental health concerns to be identified sooner and responded to in a more coordinated way. This provides you with the earliest possible connection to resources like academic advising, financial advising, counselling, or other resources and support to help you get back on track.

The information is treated confidentially and is sent because I care about your academic success and wellbeing. For more information, please visit earlyalert.ubc.ca.

Accommodation

The University accommodates students with disabilities who have registered with the Disability Resource Centre. The University accommodates students whose religious obligations conflict with attendance, submitting assignments, or completing scheduled tests and examinations. **Please let me know in advance, preferably in the first week of class, if you will require any accommodation on these grounds.**

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Plagiarism is a serious offense and will be treated as such. If you cheat or plagiarize, I WILL formally report you to the Academic Integrity Program. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism. If you are unsure, please consult the following site:

<http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/resource-guides/avoiding-plagiarism/>

Grade Appeals

Students should retain a copy of all submitted assignments (in case of loss) and should also retain all their marked exams in case they wish to apply for a Review of Assigned Standing. Students have the right to review their exams and/or group project with me, providing they apply to do so within a month of receiving their final grades.

Please understand that I take grading very seriously, and make every effort to provide you with a grade that honestly reflects the quality of your work. If you believe the grade does not adequately reflect the quality of your work, return the assignment to me with short, specific, written comments arguing for why you think you deserve a higher grade.

It is best to do this within a week of the time the test/assignment is returned.

SCHEDULE OF READINGS

Week 2 (Sept 15, 17): Historical and cultural foundations of commodified labour

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 1 & 2
- Crompton, S. and Vickers, M. (2000). "One hundred Years of Labour Force". *Canadian Social Trends*. Summer.

Week 3 (Sept 22, 24): The meaning of work

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 3
- Fuller, S., P. Kershaw, and J. Pulkingham. 2008. "Constructing 'Active Citizenship': Single Mothers, Welfare, and the Logics of Voluntarism." *Citizenship Studies* 12(2):157-176.

Week 4 (Sept 29, Oct 1): Valuing work

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 4
- England, P. (2005) "Emerging Theories of Care-Work" *Annual Review of Sociology* 31: 381-399
- Cech, E.A. (2013) "Ideological Wage Inequalities? The Technical/Social Dualism and the Gender Wage Gap in Engineering" *Social Forces* 91 (4): 1147-1182

Week 5 (Oct 6, 8): Making labour markets

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 5

- Correll, Shelley J. (2004). "Constraints into Preferences: Gender, Status, and Emerging Career Aspirations." *American Sociological Review* 69: 93-113.
- Shan, Hongxia, (2013) "Skill as a Relational Construct: Hiring Practices from the Standpoint of Chinese Immigrant Engineers in Canada". *Work, Employment & Society* 27(6): 915-931

Week 6 (Oct 13, 15): Changing employment relationships and inequality: Non-standard and precarious employment

Readings:

- Introduction to cpd, conceptual guide to forms of precarious employment module, and statistics tutorial:
 - http://www.genderwork.ca/cpd/?page_id=2
 - http://www.genderwork.ca/cpd/?page_id=35
 - http://www.genderwork.ca/cpd/?page_id=382
- (C) Vosko and Clark (2009) "Canada: Gendered precariousness and social reproduction" Ch. 2 in Gender and the Contours of Precarious Employment Leah F. Vosko, Martha MacDonald and Iain Campbell eds. Routledge

Thursday is set aside to work on group projects

Week 7 (Oct 20, 22): **Review and Midterm**

Week 8 (Oct 27, 29): Organizational context and workplace inequalities:

Readings:

- Hirsh, C.E. (2014) "Beyond Treatment and Impact: A Context-Oriented Approach to Employment Discrimination" *American Behavioral Scientist* 58(2): 256-273
- Kalev, Alexandra, Frank Dobbin, and Erin Kelly. 2007. "Diversity Management in Corporate America" *Contexts* 6:21.

Thursday is set aside to work on group projects

Week 9 (Nov 3, 5): Work and family

Readings:

- Blair-Loy, M. (2009). "Work Without End? Scheduling Flexibility and Work-to-Family Conflict Among Stockbrokers". *Work and Occupations* 36(4) pp. 279-317
- Strazdins, L., M. S. Clements, et al. (2006). "Unsociable Work? Nonstandard Work Schedules, Family Relationships, and Children's Well-Being." *Journal of Marriage and Family* 68(2): 394-410.

Week 10 (Nov 10, 12): Labour migration and global divisions of labor

Readings:

- (C) Pratt, G. *Families Apart* (University of Minnesota Press), pp.41-71.

- Preibisch, K. (2010) "Pick-Your-Own Labor: Migrant Workers and Flexibility in Canadian Agriculture," *International Migration Review* 44(2):404-441.

Week 11 (Nov. 17, 19): The management and organization of work: control and resistance

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 6
- Brown, K., and M. Korczynski. (2010). "When Caring and Surveillance Technology Meet Organizational Commitment and Discretionary Effort in Home Care Work." *Work and Occupations* no. 37 (3): 404-432.

Note: Thursday is set aside to work on group project

Week 12 (Nov 24, 26): Union and regulatory responses to changing work

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 7
- Silver, B (2003) *Forces of Labor: Workers' Movements and Globalization since 1870* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 41-74.
- Cranford, C. (2012) "Gendered Projects of Solidarity: Workplace Organizing among Immigrant Women and Men." *Gender, Work & Organization* 19(2):142-164

Week 13 (Dec 1, 3): Group Project presentations , wrap-up & review

Readings:

- Sallaz Ch. 8